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⑯ Sachets and methods for their production.

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⑯ References cited:
DE-A-2 436 504
US-A-2 232 783
US-A-2 613 862
US-A-3 174 654

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Courier Press, Leamington Spa, England.

Description

This invention relates to sachets and in particular to sachets which contain an impregnated substrate.

Sachets which are small sealed bags made from impermeable plastic film or metal foil have been known for many years. Such sachets have a variety of uses such as for example in the food industry for dispensing of individual portions of liquids and pastes, e.g. mayonnaise, ketchup, and of solid materials such as cheese and butter; also in the cosmetic and toiletry industries for containing small volumes of shampoo, skin conditioners and refresher wipes which comprises generally non-woven fabric impregnated with small quantities of liquid containing a mild detergent and a perfume.

More particularly a continuous process is described in US—A—2 232 783 for the production of sachets containing a compressible pad within the sachet formed by heat sealing together two sheets from webs of film. The pads are said to be saturated with liquid and to this end compression is applied to the pads by a plunger acting on the upper web before heat sealing so that a minimum quantity of air is present within the finished sachet. Such sachets are used for cosmetic purposes. DE—A—2 436 504 broadly describes a sachet in which a sponge saturated with a cleansing agent is held compressed within the walls of the sachet. US—A—2 613 862 is concerned with transportation of resilient foam blocks. If said blocks are compressed in a dry state, then they do not retain their original shape or may even fracture. The invention therein provides a solution to that problem by packaging the foam in a moist state; the liquid level in such a package is low compared with that described in US—A—2 232 783 and DE—A—2 436 504.

There has however been a need in the medical, and in particular surgical art for a sachet containing a wipe which will not harbour bacteria and which contains a larger quantity of liquid than hitherto such as an antiseptic liquid for hand washing of staff prior to surgery.

According to the present invention a sachet which comprises a sealed bag containing a compressible sponge carrier which is held under compression within the sachet by pressure exerted by the walls of the sachet onto the carrier, characterised in that one of the walls of the sachet is a preformed dish-like pocket, the carrier is a foam sponge having reticulated or open cells and the carrier is thoroughly impregnated with an antiseptic liquid.

The carrier is made from a compressible foam sponge having an open or reticulated cell structure. Such structures are well known in the art. Hitherto an open cell foam has generally not been found suitable for such an antiseptic sponge because it generally has too slow an uptake of liquid for satisfactory impregnation during manufacture and distribution of the liquid throughout the foam is not thorough; indeed

parts may be dry and hence harbour bacteria. However reticulated foam may be used but is less desirable on cost grounds. Suitable foam may be made from polyester and preferably polyether polyurethane. One face of the carrier may be provided with other cleaning aids such as a moulded brush or scouring or scrub foam pad if desired.

Sachets are generally made from plastics film or metal foil preferably having thickness between 50 µm and 300 µm which are capable of being sealed by heat sealing or less desirably an adhesive, radio-frequency or ultrasonic means to form the sachet bag. Very often laminates are used to combine desirable properties of the films and foils. For example polyethylene terephthalate/low density polyethylene laminate, nylon/low density polyethylene are conventional laminates; the polyethylene is used principally to effect a good heat seal between two adjacent pieces of laminate which form the walls of the sachet. A metal foil laminate may be used in place of a film to provide, e.g. low permeability, good decorative effect but such foil laminates are less easy to pre-form.

The sachet of the present invention may be made by forming a dish-like pocket in a sheet of film or foil, placing a measured amount of liquid, suitably an antiseptic into the pocket, placing a piece of carrier having base area smaller than the base area of the pocket into the pocket, placing a second film or foil over the pocket which contains the liquid and piece of carrier to form an assembly, evacuating the pocket and around the assembly below atmospheric pressure, heat sealing the second film or foil around the edge of the pocket to form a sachet and releasing the vacuum around the sachet. Atmospheric pressure will cause the pocket to decrease in volume, and compress the carrier. The carrier takes up further quantities of antiseptic liquid in the sachet and expands on withdrawal from the open sachet. Penetration of liquid into the carrier may be assisted by manipulation, for example compression through nip rolls, of the sachet or pressure cycling. Suitably the vacuum will be in the range 50 to 650 mm of mercury, preferably 150 to 450 mm of mercury, although the vacuum may eventually be chosen according to the desired degree of compression.

In an alternative embodiment the piece of carrier may have height greater than the depth of the pocket whilst its base area is less than that of the pocket. In manufacturing such a sachet the carrier is compressed by pressure applied preferably to the second or upper film or foil before evacuation and sealing steps. Such a sachet generally has an improved appearance.

It is envisaged for such commercial production of the present sachet, a continuous process would be carried out in which pockets are produced as parts of a continuous web of film or foil, and measured amounts of antiseptic solution and carriers are placed into the pockets at stations along the web as the web passes the stations.

Thereafter a second web, possibly printed, would be placed over the web containing the pockets, followed by the evacuation stage, the sachet formed by heat sealing the two webs around each pocket, releasing the vacuum and separating the sachets as required by cross and/or longitudinal cutting between adjacent sachets.

The present invention has an advantage therefore over an alternative sachet produced by impregnating a reticulated foam sponge by squeezing and dipping the squeezed sponge into antiseptic solution and releasing the sponge followed by wrapping or forming a sachet around that impregnated sponge in that voids containing no antiseptic are formed in such a sponge so leading to a possibility of spread of infection in use.

A suitable antiseptic solution contains chlorhexidine gluconate in water at a concentration of about 4% by weight. Such a solution is available as 'Hibiscrub' (Imperial Chemical Industries PLC).

The invention is illustrated with reference to the accompanying figures in which

Figure 1 is a top plan of a sachet according to the invention and

Figure 2 is a section on the line I—I of Figure 1.

The sachet was produced as follows. A pocket having depth 25 mm., length 90 mm., and width 60 mm., was formed with a surrounding shoulder by evacuating a sheet of laminate into similar sized mould. Antiseptic solution (20 cm.³; 'Hibiscrub' (Imperial Chemical Industries PLC) was placed into the pocket. A piece of reticulated cell polyether polyurethane foam (30 pores per linear cm., density 0.0015 g/cm.³) having length and width slightly smaller than those of the pocket but similar height to pocket depth was placed into the pocket containing antiseptic solution. A top film or foil was placed above the pocket so as to overlap onto the surrounding shoulder to form an assembly. The chamber containing the assembly was evacuated to a pressure of 350 mm mercury substantially retaining the original dimensions; then the top film or foil was heat-sealed to the surrounding shoulder. After heat-sealing, the vacuum was released and the sachet pocket reduced in volume by half its original volume so compressing the foam sponge. On opening the sachet, the foam resumed its original size and contained almost all the liquid; examination of the foam showed that it had been thoroughly wetted with the liquid.

With reference to Figures 1 and 2, the sachet comprises a top foil (1) which is a laminate of two films (2, 3) of which (2) is made from biaxially oriented polyethylene terephthalate (thickness 12 µm; draw ratio 3.3:1 in both directions) and film (3) is made from low density polyethylene (thickness 50 µm). The bottom foil (4) is provided with a pocket (5) and surrounding shoulder (6) and also a laminate of two films (7, 8) of which film (7) is made from low density polyethylene (thickness 70 µm) and film (8) is made from nylon (thickness 30 µm). The top and bottom foils are

sealed together through heat seals (9) on the shoulder. Impregnated sponge (10) is located within the pocket and held under compression mainly by the top foil (1) and the base of pocket (5). A V-notch (11) is provided to facilitate opening of the sachet and removal of the impregnated sponge (10). It will be appreciated that the present sachet will have some ridges or loose folds in the walls, base and top as they concertina from the effect of atmospheric pressure after releasing the vacuum.

Claims

1. A sachet which comprises a sealed bag containing a compressible sponge carrier (10) which is held under compression within the sachet by pressure exerted by the walls (1, 4) of the sachet onto the carrier (10), characterised in that one (4) of the walls of the sachet is a preformed dish-like pocket (5), the carrier (10) is a foam sponge having reticulated or open cells and the carrier (10) is thoroughly impregnated with an antiseptic liquid.
2. A sachet as claimed in claim 1 characterised in that at least one of the walls (1, 4) is formed from a laminate film.
3. A sachet as claimed in claim 2 characterised in that the film is a laminate of low density polyethylene and nylon.
4. A method of making a sachet which comprises forming a dish-like pocket (5) in a sheet (4) of film or foil, placing a suitable amount of liquid antiseptic into the pocket, placing a carrier (10) which is a compressible foam sponge having reticulated or open cells into the pocket (5), the carrier (10) having base area smaller than the base area of the pocket (5) but a height greater than the depth of the pocket, placing a second film or foil (1) over the pocket (5) which contains the liquid antiseptic and compressible sponge carrier (10), compressing the carrier (10) by pressure applied to the second film or foil (1) so that the second film or foil (1) overlaps the shoulder surrounding the pocket (5) to form an assembly, evacuating the pocket and around the assembly below atmospheric pressure, sealing the second film or foil (1) around the edge of the pocket (5) to form a sachet, and releasing the vacuum around the sachet.
5. A method as claimed in claim 4 which is an essentially continuous process comprising forming pockets from a continuous web of film or foil, placing measured amounts of liquid antiseptic and carrier into the pockets at stations along the web as the web passes those stations, placing a second web of film or foil over the web containing the pockets, compressing the carrier by pressure applied to the second web of film or foil so that the second web overlaps the shoulder surrounding the pocket to form an assembly, forming the sachet by sealing the two webs around the pocket, releasing the vacuum and separating the sachets.

6. A method as claimed in either claim 4 or claim 5 in which the sealing is achieved by heat.

Revendications

1. Sachet qui comprend une enveloppe scellée contenant un support (10) en éponge compressible qui est maintenu sous compression à l'intérieur du sachet par une pression exercée par les parois (1, 4) du sachet sur le support (10), caractérisé en ce que l'une (4) des parois du sachet est une poche préformée (5) analogue à une cuvette, le support (10) est une éponge en mousse comportant des cellules réticulées ou ouvertes et le support (10) est imprégné complètement d'un liquide antiseptique.

2. Sachet selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce qu'au moins l'une des parois (1, 4) est formée à partir d'un film stratifié.

3. Sachet selon la revendication 2, caractérisé en ce que le film est un stratifié de polyéthylène à basse densité et de "Nylon".

4. Procédé de fabrication d'un sachet qui consiste à former une poche (5) analogue à une cuvette dans une plaque (4) constituée d'un film ou d'une feuille, à placer une quantité convenable de liquide antiseptique dans la poche, à placer un support (10) qui est une éponge en mousse compressible comportant des cellules réticulées ou ouvertes à l'intérieur de la poche (5), le support (10) présentant une surface de base inférieure à la surface de base de la poche (5), mais une hauteur supérieure à la profondeur de la poche, à placer un second film ou une seconde feuille (1) au-dessus de la poche (5) qui contient le liquide antiseptique et le support (10) en éponge compressible, à comprimer le support (10) par l'application d'une pression sur le second film ou la seconde feuille (1) afin que la seconde film ou la seconde feuille (1) recouvre l'épaulement entourant la poche (5) pour former un ensemble, à faire le vide dans la poche et autour de l'ensemble, au-dessous de la pression atmosphérique, à sceller le second film ou la seconde feuille (1) sur le bord périphérique de la poche (5), pour former un sachet, et à libérer le vide entourant le sachet.

5. Procédé selon la revendication 4 qui est un processus essentiellement continu consistant à former des poches à partir d'une bande continue de film ou de feuille, à placer des quantités mesurées de liquide antiseptique et de support dans les poches, en des postes situés le long de la bande, au fur et à mesure que cette dernière les franchit, à placer une seconde bande constituée d'un film ou d'une feuille au-dessus de la bande contenant les poches, à comprimer le support par l'application d'une pression à la seconde bande constituée d'un film ou d'une feuille afin que la seconde bande recouvre l'épaulement entourant la poche pour former un ensemble, à former le sachet en scellant les deux bandes sur le pourtour de la poche, à éliminer le vide et à séparer les sachets.

6. Procédé selon la revendication 4 ou la reven-

dication 5 dans lequel le scellage est réalisé à chaud.

Patentansprüche

1. Sachet, bestehend aus einem versiegelten Beutel, der einen zusammendrückbaren Trägerschwamm (10) enthält, welcher innerhalb des Sachets durch Druck, der durch die Wandungen (1, 4) des Sachets auf den Träger (10) ausgeübt wird, in einem zusammengedrückten Zustand gehalten wird, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß eine (4) der Wandungen des Sachets aus einer vorgefertigten schüsselartigen Tasche (5) besteht, der Träger (10) aus einem geschäumten Schwamm mit netzartigen oder offenen Zellen besteht und der Träger (10) sorgfältig mit einer antiseptischen Flüssigkeit imprägniert ist.

2. Sachet nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß mindestens eine der Wandungen (1, 4) aus einem Laminatfilm hergestellt ist.

3. Sachet nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Film ein Laminat aus Polyethylen niedriger Dichte und Nylon ist.

4. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines Sachets, bei welchem in einer Schicht (4) aus einem Film oder einer Folie eine schüsselartige Tasche (5) hergestellt wird, eine geeignete Menge einer antiseptischen Flüssigkeit in die Tasche eingebracht wird, ein Träger (10), der aus einem zusammendrückbaren geschäumten Schwamm mit netzartigen oder offenen Zellen besteht, in der Tasche (5) angeordnet wird, wobei der Träger (10) eine kleinere Grundfläche als die Grundfläche der Tasche (5), aber eine größere Höhe als die Tiefe der Tasche aufweist, ein zweiter Film oder eine zweite Folie (1) über der Tasche (5), die die antiseptische Flüssigkeit und den zusammendrückbaren geschäumten Träger (10) enthält, angeordnet wird, der Träger (10) durch auf den zweiten Film oder die zweite Folie (1) ausgeübten Druck so Zusammengedrückt wird, daß der zweite Film oder die zweite Folie (1) den die Tasche (5) umgebenden Flansch überlappt, wobei eine Zusammenstellung gebildet wird, die Tasche und die sie umgebende Zusammenstellung auf unteratmosphärischen Druck evakuiert wird, der zweite Film oder die zweite Folie (1) rund um den Rand der Tasche (5) zur Bildung eines Sachets aufgesiegelt wird und das Vakuum vom Sachet weggenommen wird.

5. Verfahren nach Anspruch 4, welches ein im wesentlichen kontinuierliches Verfahren ist, bei welchem Taschen aus einer kontinuierlichen Bahn eines Films oder einer Folie hergestellt werden, abgemessene Mengen antiseptischer Flüssigkeit und Träger an Stellen entlang der Bahn in die Taschen eingebracht werden, während die Bahn an diesen Stellen vorbeiläuft, eine zweite Bahn aus einem Film oder einer Folie über der Bahn mit den Taschen angeordnet wird, der Träger durch auf die zweite Bahn aus einem Film oder einer Folie ausgeübten Druck zusammengedrückt wird, so daß die zweite Bahn den die Tasche umgebenden Flansch überlappt, wobei eine Zusammenstellung gebildet wird, die Sa-

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chets durch Zusammensiegen der beiden Bahnen rund um die Taschen gebildet werden, das Vakuum wegenommen wird und die Sachets getrennt werden.

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6. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 4 oder 5, bei welchem das Siegeln mit Wärme durchgeführt wird.

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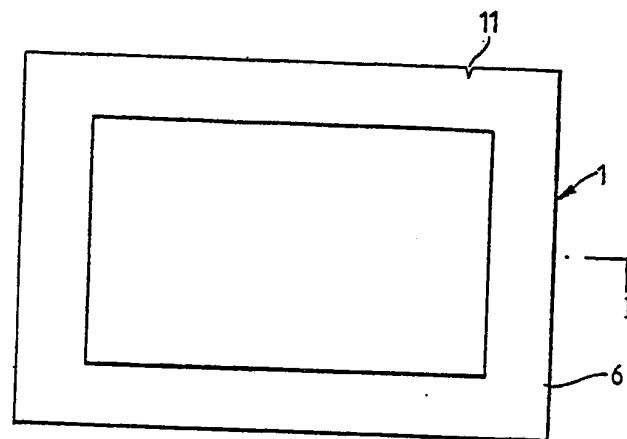


Fig.1.

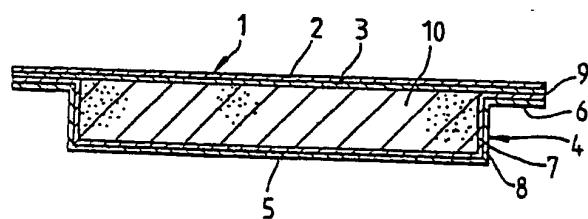


Fig.2.